

memories
by
Ernest Abraham.

Krakow 1930th)

My earliest recollections, are probably from age 4 or 5.

We are living in Krakow, at Bonerowska street #3. A one bedroom apartment in the rear part of building, on second floor.

We speak German. My mother was raised and schooled in Vienna (later I found she was born in Poland). I was born in Vienna. Our family came to Poland when I was about 2.

My father was born in Pilsen, Poland.

To avoid military service, he went to Vienna and there worked in a Del-Ka shoe store.

Del-Ka was a large chain of individually owned stores, united under this name.

Owner of this chain (Mr. Klausner) wanted to expand eastward, into Poland.

He chose my father and other 2 or 3 key personnel, to establish the firm in Krakow.

This is how we came to Poland.

We were Austrian citizens and remained so, through all the years, keeping in mind, that when

I grow up, I will be exempt from military service. (Jews did not fare well there)

My father's position was, as a buyer of children shoe for all the Del-Ka stores opening up in Poland.

I remember, my first day of school. This little boy, with long hair, bangs and speaking German.

This is a picture of my sister Lisa and me. Taken in April 1928 in Krakow.

It was sent to my aunt Rose (mother's sister) in Vienna.

She emigrated to the States, in 1938.

with her husband Sam (Siegfried) and son Kurt. Both died within a week

of each other. Kurt (a widower) lives in Maywood NJ.

His two daughters live nearby.

His last name is Frolich.

We are not in touch, as he grew remorseful and did not answer

my telephone calls.



Krakow 1930th)

I remeber, little of my Public schooll days. The school was on Zielona street, corner Dietlowska. I had few friends in school.

In the building, where we lived a family Kammerling, had a son my age and we became friends.

We had a code whistle, to call each other(a few bars from Carmen's March of the Torreadors).

Another friends of my parents, were the Geitheims. They were of simmlar background.

Wife Roumenian and he from Poland. They had a daughter, about my age and a younger

son. Tusia and Arthur. Our parents met often socialy and we spend many summers together.

As a young girl she would win many beauty pagents, held in resorts.

I always thought, her father was paying someone off.

Krakow 1935)

Dealing with shoe manufacturers, my father, became friends, with one of them.

A Mr. Wojcik, from Myslenice(about 25 miles from Krakow). A very aristocratic Pole, with his own convertible automobile(not many people owned cars in those days.

I remeber him going hunting(with a few rifles in back seat) and coming back, with a deer tied to the hood of his car.

With this Wojcik, my father ,decided to leave Krakow and open a Del-Ka store in Lodz(second largest city in Poland, population 600,000)

This is when he formed his life's motto, "Work for yourself", which he later imparted to me.

Lodz 1935)

Our shoestore, on Piotrkowska street #53, was the finest shoe store in Lodz.

We had the lates technology and convienices.

An X-ray machine, to fit children shoes, also adults. The dangers of those rays, were still unknown then. But a great selling point in those days. It was revolutionary.

There were children's rides, to keep them busy, while parents shopped.

In back of store, were 3 pedicure cabins, with equipment patented by my father.

There was a code, between sales people and my father.

Farther back , a small office. When my mother came in(she was the store's cashier)

She would change her clothes ther One day a pedicure customer, walked out with her Persian coat. Just imagine what went on.

My father's name was Adolf, but it was not very popular in those days, so we all called him Arnold.

Of course all my shoes came from the store always the latest styles..

Our store windows were trimmed by profesionals. They used colorfull fahrics, depending on season. Nothing was wasted. I remember seamstresses in our house, a week at a time,

Sewing our underwear, pyjamas from theese fabrics, once seasons changed.

I always knew what I will weare next season.

Lodz 1935)

I am 11 years old, starting a new school.

After speaking to many locals, my parents decide on a very prestgeous private school

"Zgromadzenia Kupcow"(Merchant's Guild") on Narutowicza street.

I am an average student. I dont exel in any one subject. I don't love school either.

I am poor in sports and eagerly chosen to join a team.

We are six Jews in a class of about 30. We keep to ourself and socialize between each other.

The only sports I enjoy, are away from school. skating, skiing and swimming during the summer

The Polish hero marshal Pilsudski died that year.

Jews lost a friend.

Lodz 1935)

My teens began in this city.

I vaguely remeber my Bar-Mitzwa.

The dinner was at home,with some of my parents friends.Most of our family was scattered all over Poland and Vienna.People just did not travel easily those days.

My grandmother came.Always brought bananas,a big treat in Poland.

She had lost her husband,about that time.

My recollections of him,a large man,a mane of gray hair,taking me to a park in Vienna,"The Augarten".

We would travel to Vienna often.Usually when school was out.

My sister Lisa,was born with a divided small tongue in back of the throat.

This caused her to lisp.In Vienna, known for best surgeons in Europe,Lisa was operated, to correct this condition.

After the first operation the stitches pulled apart,forcing her to have to repeat the procedure.

My mother always missed Vienna.

Lodz 1935-39)

My mother missed Vienna.

This is an understatement.She always spoke German to us.In later years, we would answer in Polish.

She did finally speak some Polish,but grammatically correct. We had many laughs about it.

She loved to sing.She sang when alone or with us.

All the German operettas,love songs, folk songs,arias etc...

The words to some of those songs I remember till today.

She was not a "hosefrau".Went to business with my father every day.

Home was left to our maid Juzia(I called her Juska)who cleaned and cooked and a governess

Bronia.She made sure,our homework was done correctly and helped us academically.

As we grew,Bronia would help out in the store in busy seasons.

She slept in same room with us and was first to arouse me sexually.

After leaving Lodz in late 1939,our path never crossed again.

Lodz 1935-39)

The six Jewish students,inmy class,were my only buddies.

We would meet after school and play 5 card draw poker,

walk the promenade,where all young people met,

go to the movies or skate during the winter months.

Sometime during those years,I also started smoking.

I also developed an appetite for books.

First the required reading,then books everyone read,

*then anything that sounded good.About cowboy and indians
spies, murders,mutinies....everything.*

Picture of my mother



Lodz 1936)

The store had to have some problems.

The partnership dissolved. My father was paying out his ex-partner,

It put a big strain on our finances. money became scarce.

My tuition was always in arrears.

The firm Del-Ka required monthly royalty payment.

The store's name was changed to Be-Ka (I don't know how they arrived with this name)

The store was made somewhat smaller. But we were surviving.

It must have been a very difficult period for my parents.

I was too young to realize their struggle.

My life went on in the same carefree manner.

Lodz 1937)

The world scene was becoming more hectic all the time

Hitler was making front pages daily.

In 1938 came the "Anschluss", where Austria became part of Germany. Many Austrians threw flowers at the German troops marching in.

Jews suffered almost from the start.

All Jews of Polish origin were given a few days to disengage from business and leave for Poland.

Thousands upon thousands arrived daily, looking for a place to stay and a job.

As a result of this flood of refugees, the Polish government retaliated.

They would gather up all German (and Austrian) Jews and transport them into Germany.

Our Austrian passports were now German ones, with a large letter J stamped on its cover.

(I stood for Jude)

One day upon my arrival from school, a policeman was waiting in our apartment.

He escorted me to the station house, where my mother and my sister were already there.

We were told that as a reprisal of Germany's actions, we were being deported.

My father was able to evade the police and hid somewhere.

We were loaded into trains and sent to a border town named Zbaszyn.

The next day, our store's manager arrived in Zbaszyn, with special shoes for all of us.

The soles and heels were hollowed out and money in large denominations was folded in.

He also brought other supplies and instruction from father.

We were put on trains and transported to the nearest German town.

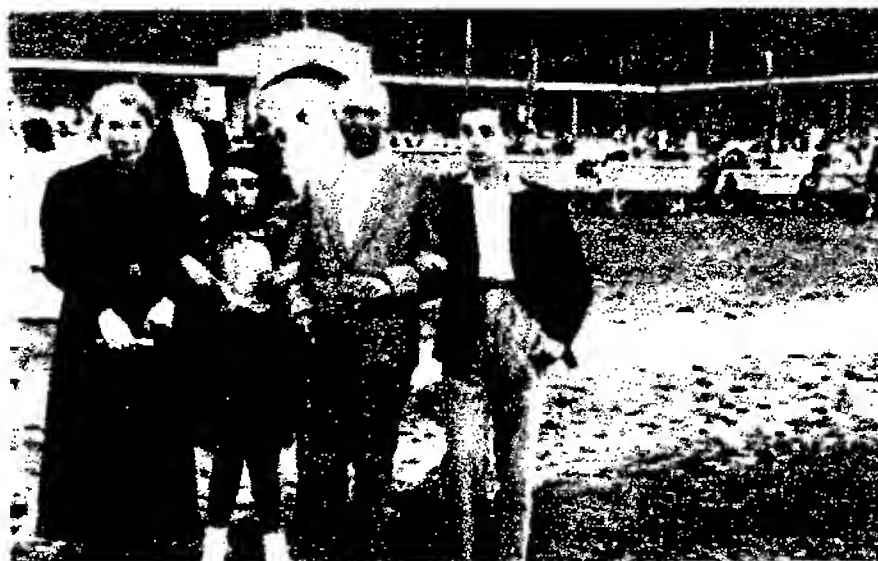
All this was very scary, knowing Germany's attitude toward Jews.

Germans just turned the train around and sent it back over the border.

This was repeated several times. After a few days the Poles relented and told us to go home.

This was a very scary episode was all of us.

This picture, taken in a resort town of Muzyna, in front of a bandshell. From left: My grandmother Golde Wilder, my sister Lisa, my father and me. About 1935.



Lodz 1939)

I am 15 years old, we live at Moniuszki 11, in Lodz.

We have a large elegant appartment in center of city. 3 bedrooms a dining room. 2 halls, a kitchen, a bathroom, seperate toilet and a small maids room, a terrace in front and a back entrance with a gangway. My parents own a shoestore. I go to a gymnasium (3rd year).

My sister is starting gymnasium this year.

Life is good.

A few weeks ago, I came back from a vacation. 4 boys with a tutor, in some resort.

It was the first time I went away without my parents. Everything was new.

The kind of food we ate, and the kind of girls we met. New experiences all the time.

Lodz 1939)

This picture, taken in Lodz
in 1939. My sister Lisa 12,
my father 42 and I 14



Lodz 1939)

September 1st! Germans march into Poland! WAR!

What exitment! Life would never be the same for us.

We sleep in store now, on mattresses lying on the floor. This in case of bombing attack, ground floor beeing safest (very naive and inexperienced).

One morning, a lot of commotion in street. Germans are marching on Lodz!

First thought is to flee. Where and how, these thoughts came later.

My father, though not phisicly powerful, was very resourceful.

He stopped the first horse and wagon team, that passed and the driver an offer he could not refuse (enough money). A few minutes later, we sitting on top of the wagon (each with his suitcase) and we were off to Warsaw.

Lodz 1939)

Our flight was a total disaster. The wagon bogged down in sand, as soon we left the paved streets of the city. The poor horse could not pull us through. We started walking.

Soon we had to drop all our belongings and finally, after days of suffering, came back home.

Germans were already in Lodz!

Our trusted maid, had all our valuables, taken to her parent's village, thinking, we will never return. She later restored most of the things, when threatened with a report to police.

While we were gone, germans issued an order to reopen all stores.

Obviously we could not comply.

Mobs took this opportunity, to break down the gates and door of store and looted 90% of all merchandise. Only some pairs, on top shelves were left.

Finally, German officials, closed the store and sealed it's entrance.

My mother, fluent in German, went to see the city commander and received permission to reopen.

Lodz 1939)

My father now had his store back, but nothing to sell. Yet he knew many people in shoe business. Between his friends, was a man named Margulies. Head of rubber company (Semperit). One of his coworkers in Del-Ka. His company produced rubber boots and galoshes. They filled all the empty shelves with this merchandise. The only store where one could buy it. Police had to keep order, of lines that formed every morning. Every evening, all family members had to carry home sacks of money. Most of this money went to a bank account, that a few weeks later, was frozen, as all Jewish accounts were. One evening a message from the City Commnd. I have an warrant to arrest Mr. Adolf Abraham. Flee!!

Lodz 1939)

After this warning, each of us packed a suitcase with his or hers best. And so with one suitcase each we left Lodz. Now I have to go back in time somewhat. My parents saw what was happening all around them. We thought of emmigration, soon. Most likely to Austalia (mother had a brother, there). We all had new clothes made and once a week, a teacher came to our apartment, with all participating and taught English. So when we came to Australia, we would not spend money on clothes and knew some native tangué. We thought, we still had time. So with a suitcase of our best, we left Lodz, never to come back again. We went to Krakow. We had lived there once, my parents still had many friends there. Our beautiful apartment, the store, all gone just like that.....

Krakow 1939)

We used to be friends with family Kammerling. At one time our neighbors. At the onset of war, many people run away to Russia, as the lesser of two evils. Mr. Kammerling and his son Richard were among them. Mrs. Kammerling was alone in her spacious apartment. This is where we came to live, when arrived in Krakow. We will share this apartment and share expenses. Address: Librowszczyna 7, across from PKO building.

Krakow 1940)

Schools were closed for Jews. I was never in love with school, but when forbidden, I missed it. There was nothing for us to do all day. Then we organized in age groups, hired teachers and met in private homes for instructions. This is where I met Richard Ores. He lived in next building and we were in same study group. We became friends, spending many hours in each other's home. He was always a rebel and I, an obedient son.

Krakow 1940)

We thought all this will blow over soon and we will go back to our comfortable lives. German tanks were made of paper, it's all just an illusion. What else do they want? How naive we all were. New orders coming daily. Curfew, no one in street, after certain hour. Jews could only live in a designated area. Jews have to report once a week, for snow removal duties. Each time you went ID would be stamped. You must have a properly stamped ID, to receive your rations, or when asked to present it. You could send a substitute, to do this service. A whole industry sprung up. People going to shovel snow for pay. I often went for my father. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, all shoveling snow.



TAKING IT UP FOR THE CAMERA
RICHARD ORES & J



MISIA AND RICHARD

ABOUT 1942
JAN 18

Krakow 1941)

*We are now living in a shabby room on Dietlowska street
Our apartment became out of bounds for Jews.
What we are living on? I never asked. I was still spoiled, my father will take care.
Through his connections, I got a job in a shoe factory, doing nothing.
It did not last very long.
Now there was a bright light in my life. I was in love.
On one of my dates, I met a girl, her name was Misia Goldring.
It was one of those dates, a few boys and girls. One of the girls a gorgeous brunette.
Everyone trying to her attention, other a soso blond. I take the other.
We fell in love, as only 17 year olds can.*

Krakow 1941)

*A new order, announces, that all Jews, will have to live, in a section of Krakow, called Podgorze.
The other side of the river Wistula.
The section is marked on city maps. This will be the "Ghetto".
All this has to happen, within a certain time. Anyone found outside this Ghetto will be arrested..
We moved in to a tiny room and kitchen apartment, on top of a four story walk up.
Open gangway along the building has the toilets, no bathrooms, terrible.
But we are still together.
Walls are erected around the designated area. To leave or enter the Ghetto, you must
Go through a police manned gate.*

Krakow 1942)

*Life in the Ghetto, is hard to imagine.
All this humanity squeezed into a few blocks.
We all wore a 3 inch wide, white band with star of David, on our right arm.
A special pass was required to leave the Ghetto.
Misia's and her parents left Krakow, to avoid coming into the Ghetto.
We wrote torrid love letters for a while, then mail for Jews was no longer allowed.*

Krakow 1942)

*With our toilet out on the gangway and no bathroom, we would all go every week to
public bath house. One rented a tiny room with a tub in it.
I went with my father and mother and sister went together.
Before long we all had lice. Sanitation in such crowded areas was impossible.
New transports of Jews, who were living in surrounding villages, came in daily.
Living quarters had to be found.
Into our kitchen, another family moved in.*

Krakow 1942)

*When we first came into the Ghetto, my father sought some business opportunities.
He knew shoes, but leather was not available. He had a wooden sole made, with high heel,
Had it stained. From special colored straw, plaited in fashionable designs, they would
fashion thongs. This attached to the wooden sole would make a nice sandal.
The plaiters employed were Anka and Jusia Luszczyńska.
What a small world!*

Krakow 1942)

*Where and how it all started, I don't remember.
My father met a German civilian (Entrepreneur) and talked him into building a shoe factory
Outside the Ghetto. This German got all necessary permits and allotments.
The factory became a reality and the factory was actually producing some shoes, but most*

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*They were making a lot of this worthless money.
But you could buy gold and diamonds with it.*

Krakow Ghetto 1942)

The Ghetto is now bursting at it's seams. Thousands upon thousands in a few block area.

Relocations! This is what Germans called it.

Lists were made . Old people, sick people, unemployed....

They were herded into a large square, loaded on trucks and taken to railroad station.

At the time we actually believed it to be a resettlement, but when no news ever came back, we expected the worst.

Still the truth was hard to believe .

We know it now. They were simply put to death.

Krakow Ghetto 1942)

I am now 18teen. Fairly well dressed, for the times.

I wore a pair of custom made boots, with riding briches to match.

We were still emulating our tormentors.

Erna Rosner ,remembers me from those times,says,i always carried a book,under my arm.

I met a girl,her name was Gina(Landau). We fell in love,she was beautiful.

She lived in the Ghetto with her brother and stepmother. She worked as a milliner, outside the Ghetto. She had a special pass. I also had one(for picking up leather.)

I would pick her up from work ,often.

We would take our armbands off and walk around the city. How foolish!

Krakow Ghetto 1942)

Every person who was employed, was issued a special ID.

New order. all persons without ID, report to Zgody square.

Thousands complied. Gina's stepmother, one of them.

I came to see her. Sitting there and crying. Gina decided to go with her.

Last time I saw my beautiful Gina!

Krakow Ghetto 1942)

It's late summer of 1942.

Ghetto is surrounded by SS.

Loudspeakers blaring :everyone out! everyone out!

Anybody found inside of building will be shot!

Women will line up in one section of Ghetto, men in another.

Form lines of two and approach the officers! Dogs barking all over.

I go with my father, Lisa, with mother.

When we finally face the Germans, with a riding crop he motions my father to one side, me to another.

It takes hours, we don't really know what's next. Finally trucks are loaded and depart.

I am still left in the Ghetto.

When I finally get home, no one comes. I am left all alone. It was the last time I saw my family.

Krakow Ghetto 1942)

This fateful day I returned to an empty house.

Perhaps it was just a resettlement?

I never had to think for myself. Mother provided meals as best she could and father told us all what to do. He must have thought about just such a day.

*The family's wealth, was always divided into four shares.
Each of us carried, his or her share with them all the time.
Secreted into clothing or specially designed shoes. Usually the shoe's heel
My share was a large diamond and about 20 gold pieces, each the size of a dime.*

Krakow Ghetto 1942)

*This last transport out of the Ghetto, numbered into thousands (now I know it was send
to Belzec, an extermination camp).*

Ghetto was rezoned. Our building had to be vacated.

I had a few days to find new quarters.

*It was an impossible task. Finally a childhood friend of mine (Tusia Giertheim)
offered a bed in a room she shared with another girl.*

*A large room divided by a curtain, where the original owner slept
other half two girls and me.*

Tusia survived the war. Alone, she left for Israel. We keep in touch.

Krakow Ghetto 1942)

Now I had to think for myself and make my own decisions.

My parents, my sister, my sweetheart.. gone!

I still work in shoe corporation, no pay but must have stamp on ID.

I change a gold piece once in a while.

I am not hungry, just lost.

Krakow Ghetto 1942)

Ghetto was run in it's daily routine by Jews.

At one time or another we all needed their services.

One day, this is where I saw Ciema for the first time. Very fleetingly.

But I could not help noticing her.

She just stood out, in a crowd.

Our eyes met, and this was all

My sister Lisa



Tusia in Israel



Krakow Ghetto 1943)

Winter is just about gone. It is March. New orders. Ghetto is being moved, into nearby camp Plaszow. On the site of Jewish cemetery, barracks were erected. It will be known as K.Z. Lager Plaszow (concentration camp Plaszow). The movie "Schindler's list" was made there. Man from Ghetto, went out for month to build this camp and stories of upturned graves, bones monument used to build roads, were heard daily. There were barracks for housing, factories, kitchens, hospital, even a lumber mill, to build more barracks. Many men, working in this mill, lost fingers and hands, after 16 hour days of doing this unfamiliar job. One of the doctors in our hospital, was Dr. Tilles. Fortunately, I never needed their attention.

K.Z. Plaszow 1943)

A barrack, was a long building, made of wood. There were two tiers of large shelves running against the walls. Those were our sleeping quarters. Lower and upper shelf. On those shelves we had straw sacks, each sack serving two men. Mine was a corner, upper straw sack, which I shared with a fellow named Pflanzgraben. I don't remember his first name, but you could not forget such last name. After a couple of weeks, the straw became breeding ground for bedbugs, billions upon billions of those little critters, made our nights miserable. Night time was feeding time. On the sack we had a sheet (we still had things we brought from home). Two or three times a night, we had to shake out this sheet, unto the floor and lower shelf occupants. We were always full of sores and red marks. We also were young and could joke about it all. But it really was not funny, bedbugs biting, spreading diseases...

K.Z. Plaszow 1943)

On our first or second day in camp, when we were all in barrack, an SS officer, with two soldiers came in. ATTENTION! Everyone lined up against his shelf. The officer takes out his pistol and shoots nearest man in the head. And announces: any one disobeying will meet this fate. A large pail is put next to him. All your valuables, money, watches, into the pail! With everyone scared out their minds, the pail filled in no time.

K.Z. Plaszow 1943)

I had, some 20 gold pieces and a large diamond. My share of family's fortune. I walked by and did not throw it into the pail. But too scared to carry it with me. Sometimes searches were made if anything found it was usually death. I had a shaving brush, made out of metal and the handle would unscrew. It was hollow inside, there I stashed my fortune filling it with paper, so it would not rattle. I left it on the shelf, when going to work. I took a chance, that it still be there when I return.

K.Z. Plaszow 1943)

We had separate barracks for men and women, but after work we could move freely, until curfew. A friend of mine (Tusia Geitheim) worked outside the camp. There sometimes, through contact with Polish workers, for money they could buy some foodstuff, and later smuggle it into camp (it was always risky). Whatever they didn't eat they sold.

K.Z.Plaszow 1943)

*I was assigned to work in a shoe factory.
By now I was an expert in making wood soled shoes.
Standart campwear.
We sat at low cobbler's tables, about 8 men to a table
At this table sat Alfred and Julian, this is where and how we met.*

K.Z.Plaszow 1943)

*One day, coming to my barrack, after work, I check my secret stash.
Half of it is gone. Half?
When my sleeping partner, came back from his shift I openly confronted him.
Until now I thought no one knew.
He did not deny it. Said he was hungry and had nothing.
Said he took half and left me half, he could have taken it all.
I did nothing.
We stayed together for some month and then our ways parted.
It was back in the 1980th, at a Cracow Friendship Soc. meeting in Queens,
a member came over announcing that someone is here to meet me.
When I met this person, he introduced himself, my is now Miller, but it used to be Pflanzgraben.
He lives in Toronto and is an electrical contractor.
I would have never recognized him, neither would he, me.
We never mentioned Plaszow.
This story is not yet finished.
Last winter in Florida, we were invited to a dinner party (by Eddie Schmeiser from Krakow)
and the guy sitting next to me is Pflanzgraben!
Mountains don't meet, but people do.*

K.Z.Plaszow 1943)

*The camp's commander, An Austrian, Ahmon Ghatt (not sure of spelling).
About 6'5 and weighing 250 pounds. Just to look at him was scary.
Riding a large white horse and two vicious Dobermans, running along side (get the picture?).
A cruel and despotic man. Loves to see men suffer at his sight.
He would shoot just to see how you will die.
Needless to say we tried desperately not to cross his path.
Alfred had the misfortune to do just that.
⇒ Ghatt sicked the dogs on him.
They tore the flesh off his back.
Public lashings was another of his favorites.
He would choose 50 or so men, they let their pants down, bend over and were lashed 25 times.
Public hangings another play thing.
A sadist!
He was tried and hanged in Krakow, after the war.*

K.Z. Plaszow 1943)

*We also had our Jewish police.
They did all their dirty work. The lashing, the hangings, checking for smuggled things et..
Many young men were drawn to this.
A little extra food, a little sway over the hapless inmates, power!
Some just what they had to do but some relished their power. Forced themselves on women,
took bribes to cover some minor infraction, used their leather crops excessively.
Freddie Immergluck was one (he was OK).*

K.Z.Plaszow 1943)

*We still wear our own clothing. On top of it ,yellow lines are painted.
And I still have my boots. Soon I will have to discard them.
Life is always an inch away from death.
From our factory's windows a small hill is visible.
We see daily lines of people marching up this hill,with a SS escort.
A few minutes later, shots and SS marching back.
They had to dig their graves,before being shot.
We named it "prick's hill".
But it was not funny.Dying was part of our lives.*

K.Z.Plaszow 1943)

*Some time in midsummer,as we were cobbling at our low tables,
An SS officer came in.ATTENTION!
Everyone stiffens,when this happens. It's never anything good.
He confers with shop's foreman.
Our formen, points in our direction.
3 tables of cobblers are told to take their things and line up.
WE are going to be resettled." Prick's hill" is on everyones mind.
We were marched to the railroad link(came into camp),and loaded into cattle cars.
Train went on it's way.
P.S. the shoe factory employed some people we know.
Helga and her sister Lusia,Samek Wertheim.
Julian,Henry and Alfred were also on the train.(Henry came to visit)*

K.Z.Starachowice 1943)

*When we finally came to the end of our journey,we were in a Polish village,Starachowice.
It was a small working camp,next to a ammunition factory.
Our guards were Ukrainians,but daily life was run by a Jewish camp police.
As new arrivals,we lined up,our names were read.
When my name was called,captain of the police,came over and said,he knew my father well,
he will see to my welfare here and to call on him in need.
I am made foreman of a group of outdoor workers.Not bad?
In my group are Julian,Alfred and Henry.*

K.Z.Starachowice 1943)

*Winter of 43-44. Poland is a very cold country.
Barracks are unheated.We sleep on shelves(like in Plaszow).No strawsacks and 5
to a section.Very tight.When one turns all have to turn.Keeps us warm.
The factory is about a mile from camp.We march in columns,surrounded by the Ukrainian
guards.On way home we try to gather some wood for a fire.Fallen branches,sticks,
whatever we could find.
Inevitably the road is littered with little bows.
Our guards usually assign 2 or 3 men to clean the road after the column passes.
But we get no bags or containers to put those little sprigs into.
One day I was chosen for this cleaning duty.
After a while my arms were full.When bending, to pick up a bow,another would fall.
→ On that day ,the guard noticed my struggle.He came up and with the butt of his gun
hit me squarely in the mouth.
I lost my two front teeth.*

Starachowice 1943)

*Generally, our camp, was not an extermination camp.
Work was hard, heat from malten metal,unbearable. When the the red hot pieces were placed in
in sand beds
the wooden shoes would often catch fire.
Hands were full of blisters and burns.
But my work was outside.
Sanitation was poor.
After curfew,no one allowed outside the barrack.
At night we urinated into pails, long after they filled.
No wonder ,after a few month,typhoid fever broke out.
I succumbed to it and few days later Julian was brought in.
Hospital, It was a dangerous place to be.
A young woman,her last name was Lipton, came daily to the hospital and spoonfed me.
Said, she knew my father.She was in camp with her husband.
When inquired ,about her whereabouts after the war,I was told that she survived and
is now in Prague.A mysterious Angel.*

Starachowice 1943)

*Late summer.Sounds of big guns, could be heard, coming from east.
Daily sounds are louder.The Russians are coming!
You could feel the tension in camp. Maybe it will be over soon,we hope.
Some young men encouraged by the nearness of sound of guns,decide to try and jump the fence.
Camp is surrounded by a 12 foot high wire fence, at each corner, a watch tower,
with Ukrainians, manning machine guns.
Standart,camp layout.About 100 yards of treeless ground around the camp,then a thick forrest.
First one ,then two,then three, all OK.But then the watchman caught on.
Short bursts of fire. Soon the fence is full of bodies, hung up on it's teeth.
They will remain there for days, to discourage others.
ome are still trying,if you clear the fence and make a mad dash for the forrest,you made it.
I met one jumper in Munich after the war.*

Starachowice 1944)

*One day orders.Evacuate camp!
Railroad wagons,already waiting
Some are open,some closed.
The camp's elite is loaded first.Our Jewish police,their families,people with influence.
go into the closed cars.
Rest into open cars.
The fatefull journey begins.No one knows where we are going.
We fear the worst.The dreaded "A" word,too terrible to even say aloud."Aushwitz"
We ride those rails,what seems to be days.No food or water is rationed.
We had some crumbs of bread in our pockets.Luckily it rained occsionally,
so we could lick the drops off.
Finally,after a few days, at dawn the train stopped.*

*We all remained in cars, thinking and imaginig the unimaginable.
And then all hell broke loose.Los!Los! Dogs barking,guards yelling orders, disembark!
Everyone out!
Seals were broken on closed wagons.Everyone on the floor,suffocated.
The processing begins, heads shaved,sprayed with DDT.Our clothes are taken away.
Showers(real ones).
We issued a striped tunic,pants und cap und a pair of wooden shoes.
Allprivate possessions,gone..
But still alive.We see the woman who came with us,with their shaved heads.Awful!
Next day, I get a number tatooed on my left forearm.It's A-18680.*

Aushwitz 1944)

*After all this processing,I was able to speak to some old time inmates, about The camp.
About the grayish hue and smell.
I was told about the CyclonB showers,crematoria ovens and open pit burning of bodies.
Usualy more people are gassed then ovens can handle,rest is piled high and fire started
it last for months.*

Aushwitz 1944)

*We would just mill around waiting for our daily soup and coffee in the morning.
We are all starving. My stash long gone,with no chance of getting anything .
In Starachowice,on warm evenings,we would sit outside after work and harmonize.
A bunch of guys would always sit around and listen.
The harmonizers were Julian,Alfred, Henry, I and perhaps another guy.
Here in Aushwitz, we were not exactly in a mood to sing.
Some one,probably to ingratiate himself(for a piece of bread)
told our guards,that in our midst is a group, that sings well.
The guard asked to point us out and then ordered us to sing.
And there in Aushwitz, we had our first recital.We sang "LaCompersita".*

Buna 1944)

*In a few days, a long list of numbers are called,mine among them.
We are going to a work camp, at I.G.Farben Ind.at Buna(part of Aushwitz)
A small camp(about 5000) I G.Farben is a sprawling industrial complex.
Experimenting in "ersatz"rubber and petroleum.
Every one in camp works here.A German prisoner Otto is our Capo.
The camp is clean.None of the filth and urine,of our previous camp.
Double bunks for beds. Everyone has his own bunk,blanket and pillow.
We all try to keep clean.Take shower once a week,wash our clothes on alternate Sundays.
Work is very hard.Mostly unloading incoming trains.Cement, sand or whatever is needed.
Our capo marches our column to and from work.At work a Polish forman takes over.
Here we get to know.hunger, day after day week after week..
It's on your mind at all times.You dream of food you talk about food,food,food....
evelee at 5 am,and then endless "appells".(We stand in formation on a large square-
and are counted)Hot, cold , rain, snow...we stand.
Then black coffee and a slice of bread, this until soup in evening.*

Buna 1944)

*Backbraking work and hunger, are what I remember best from Buna.
And then were the "selections".
About once a month,usualy on a Sunday,a group of SS would come into camp.
We were al linside the barracks .
every one undress! Llie up against the wall! Face the wall!
They would walk by looking at each inmate's behind.
If one had very little muscle left,they would point at him and he was marched out to the waiting
trucks.*

They went back to Aushwitz, never seen again.

Buna 1944)

*Every second Sunday, a day off. Showers and wash day.
This fateful Sunday was turn to work.
At about 10am, planes swept over Buna. Great numbers, (I though they were British, but now
we know they were American)
Bombs fell all over. Machine gun bullets whizzed around. We hid as best we could.
Happy for the damage they create, but scared stiff.
It lasted about 15 minutes. I.G. Farben was no more.
From then on, all we did is clean up work.*

Buna 1944)

*Public executions were part of Bunas program.
For any infraction, public hangings.
The hapless inmate marched up to the scaffolding, usually 2 or 3 at a time.
Invariably they would shout something in Polish or Hebrew.
Holocaust!*

Buna 1944)

*Rumble of heavy guns, from the east. Russians!
One cold winter morning: EVACUATION!
Germans are ready to surrender this land, but not the Jews.
Everyone out! Anyone found will be shot! If you hide our dogs will find you!
Take your blankets!
And so began, what later was called "the death march".
No cars or trucks. Walk!
we walked for miles, for days...
Our column stretched for miles, freezing cold and snowing.
Our guards are walking on both sides of this column
who could not keep up was shot. we heard a shot every few minutes.
Soon the road's shoulder were full of dead bodies.
Some just sat down and waited for the bullet. For them it was an end from a nightmare.
I was not ready to give up just yet.
I always told myself, I want to tell this story. I also was 20 years old.*

Death march 1944)

*We are dragging along in this macabre march. Snow does not let up.
We all have blankets over our heads, only a small slit to see the road.
I feel a tap on my shoulder. I move the blanket away, a German officer, hands me a small
suitcase. Carry it for me! Yes sir! I could barely keep up and now, this.
I carry it for about two days, I am at the end of my strength. The officer nowhere in sight.
How would he recognize me? We all look the same, with those blankets.
That night in desperation, with a blanket over my head I opened this suitcase.
Bread, sardines, packs of cigarettes. It's hard to imagine what it meant then.
This was my second miracle, during the holocaust.
The German officer? Never saw him again.*

Gleiwitz 1945)

*Finally we arrive in Gleiwitz. A rail center.
We load into open wagons.
No one knows where we are going. It may be our final ride.
No food for days. Only what countryside provided. Some frozen tubers, half rotten.
We are crazed with hunger, getting weaker and weaker..
The trains rout, takes us through Czechoslovakia.
When train goes through an underpass, some Chechs throw loaves of bread into wagons.*

*We fight for the crumbs, fiercely, we lick snow, for water.
We are packed in tight. No room to stand up. Can't relieve yourself. Just do it where you sit.
After some days, our journey ends. Buchenwald!
Many corpses between us, some with bites taken out of them.
Are we still human?*

Buchenwald 1945)

Unloading. Many dead corpses. Cannibalism..

Same routine, showers, shave heads, DDT, new stripes, keep your shoes

Assigned to barracks in "Kleine Lager" (small camp).

These barracks are three tiered, to pack more people in.

Each section holds three persons on each tier.

I am picked to be boxelder. Responsible for 9 persons, pick up their ration and report when one dies.

Everyday, numbers are read, shipping out to nearby work camps.

I picked receive a coat. I am anxious to be called, I want that coat. No luck.

Very few of those called survived the backbreaking work in stone quarries.

Buchenwald 1945)

There is no work in Buchenwald.

Only long "appells", twice a day.

We stood in formation, for about an hour and a half each time.

It was a very mild winter in Weimar, Germany, that year.

No one could survive standing in the cold, practically naked for hours.

The rest of the day, we milled around waiting for our watery soup.

How much longer can I last?

Bones protruding all over, hardly able to walk, my days were numbered.

I wanted to survive, to tell the world about it.

I never did, but others did it, much more eloquently.

This is my contribution for my family.

Buchenwald 1945)

Camp is bursting at its seams. More people arrive daily from small satellite camps.

Distribution of food, gets more difficult

*The camp's commander decides on a new method of feeding all those thousands.
once a day, a piece of bread and a bowl of thin soup.*

A large barrack is assigned, to that purpose and each block assigned the time.

to feed. After you received your meal, you also got a token for tomorrow's meal.

Needless to say, he had to guard this token with your life.

No token, no food, no explanations.

In my barrack is a father with two sons (from Hungary)

One day an outcry: "I lost my token!" It was the father lamenting.

Later I saw the sons sharing an extra meal.

Father died the next day.

Buchenwald 1945)

The camp now has 60,000 inmates.

*Every barrack filled to capacity. Tension in the air. We don't know
what is happening. No food for two days.*

A small kettle with molasses arrives, everyone tries to dip his hand.

*Loudspeakers are blaring: "we need people to work, line up at the north gate, everyone
gets a loaf bread". It was an offer, hard to refuse, when mad from hunger.*

Thousands lined up. Each got a loaf of bread.

*They marched out, about a mile and shot in a field, where machine guns
were waiting for them.*

*Almost 50,000 thousand men went.
I was too weak to go, I knew I could not make it.
Two days later, an eerie quiet over the camp.
No loudspeakers, no shouting, no dogs.
They all just disappeared. An hour later American tanks rolled into camp
Just like that, it's over. May 5th 1945. ITS OVER!*

*Buchenwald 1945)
About 10,000 men left in camp. Most are dying.
The Americans want to help, Where to begin?
Food, hospitals, what first.
They open kitchens. All you can eat. Men, starved for so long, gorge themselves.
Next, diarrhea, for emaciated men, death sentence.
Thousands died.
I only ate farina. Four times a day farina. Hot farina, cold farina.
Every morning I went to the kitchen and got a large can of farina.
I ate it a whole day. It saved my life.*

*Buchenwald 1945)
By now, we have left our lice infested barracks, and live in the quarters
of our former tormentors. Brick houses, in a forest. Beautiful!
Four to a room. I was gaining strength.
Took long hikes, down the mountain into the town of Weimar.
People were scared of us. What will we do to them?
Our American administrators, announced a concert in camp,
to be held in our former dining halls.
I always loved music, Thousands showed up. Popular music of the day.
Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey.
If any of my friends survived, they would come to this concert.
We had a certain whistle, we called each other with.
I will try it.... Again and again.
I hear an answer, I go toward the sound. There between thousands,
I found Julian and Henry. They told me about Alfred, wounded by a bullet
in Buchenwald's hospital.*

*Buchenwald 1945)
The territory, where Buchenwald is located, will become Russian territory.
Anyone, wishing to remain under American occupation, must report to
railroad siding and will be transported to DP camp within the American Zone.
We all reported at the siding for resettlement. Another ride in cattle cars.
This time with open doors. The train dragged on and on, we simply got off
in a small Bavarian town, that looked pleasant and decided to settle there.
The town was Bamberg
On the way, a young man decided to come along: Gustek Altman.*

*Bamberg 1945)
There is a small Jewish administration already established in town.
They provide us with living quarters and ration cards.
We are assigned two rooms of a large apartment. A mother and two daughters.
Yetti and Katti, 17 and 12, both cute young girls.
Soon Alfred gets thick with Yetti. He was in love with her.
We also meet a drifting young German woman, Martha.
We talk her into staying and running our household,
Herman and Martha, were soon lovers.*

Bamberg 1945)

*I always think of this time, as the time of my ultimate freedom.
No possessions, no attachments, no worries, free!
We make inquiries about survivors. In our hearts we know.
People traveling all over Europe, looking, asking, hoping.
Alfred and Herman set out for Stuttgart, looking for her sister.
Julian and I, go to Bergen Belsen. See who is still here.
Looking for Krakow's survivors. Rose (Taft) gives us a place to sleep.
When we return home, their sister Gienia is there.
→ This is how we met.*

*Bamberg 1945)
At some occasion, we met a young Pole attached to the American Army.
He drives a motorcycle at some kind of liaison work.
After a few weeks he gets recalled, and in our backyard, stands a BMW bike.
It's still green with a white star (standard US Army paint).
We paint it over and have a great bike.*

*Bamberg 1945)
Alfred and Henry, take another trip. This time they go to Poland.
They come back with their brother Josef (Joe).
He was in the Polish army. Just took off his uniform and left.
Our quarters are getting tight.
I spend a lot of time in Stuttgart, with Gienia.
There is a lot of talk, about emigration
I have relatives in Australia and America. Both send Affidavits.
I chose America, the word always was magic to me.*

*Bamberg 1945)
One day unexpected visitors.
Two young sisters, originally from Krakow, heard that I lived in Bamberg.
They live in a town not too far away, not doing well at all.
We were always hungry for any news from Krakow. Who survived?
It was Helga and Lusja.
We gave some extra ration cards, promised to give them every month.
And this how they met (Helga and Julian).*

*Stuttgart 1946)
I spend most of my time in Stuttgart now.
It's DP camp, called Degerloch (the name of the mountain its on)
Beautiful camp on top of a mountain, accessible by special trams.
We all wait for permits to emigrate and start a new life.
Australia, America, back to Poland for some and some to Palestine.
I have made my choice. Soon, because of the fact that I was born in Vienna,
I hear from authorities. I will be eligible soon.
My quota is wide open. I want Gienia to go with me.
We get married. As a wife she goes with me
In July, we board a Liberty ship "Marine Perch", in Hamburg, Germany.
We are going to the USA!*

*New York 1946)
After a terrible journey (we were all sea sick), we arrived in New York.
At dockside, all waited, the Abrahams and the Frolichs.
It was a family decision, that we should stay with my aunt Helen (father's sister).
In the Bronx, at 1183 Walton ave.
A one bedroom apartment, third floor, walk up.
Sofa, converts to a bed. My aunt, a great host, keeps the refrigerator full.*

152188 *

D. P.

ERNST Identification Card

Name **ABRAHAM** Date of birth **JUN 8. 24.** Age **22**
Geburtsdatum Alter
Height **165** Weight **130** Hair **BROWN** Eyes **BLUE**
Größe Gewicht Haar Augen
Nationality **AUSTRIAN** D. P. Registration No. **610115817**
Nationalität D. P. Registrierungs-Nr.
D. P. Signature *Abraham Ernst* D. P. Unterschrift
Scars or identifying marks
Narben oder besondere Merkmale

Fingerprint R. Thumb
Fingerabdruck R. Daumen

Issued **STUTTGART** Camp No. **502** Date **MAY 1. 46.**
Ausgegeben in No. des Lagers Datum
Responsible to
Verantwortlich nach

Officer
Name and Rank of Issuing U. S. N.
Camp Commander or UNRRA Official
Name und Dienstgrad des Lager-
Kommandanten oder der UNRRA-Beauftragten

Validated Date
Gültigkeitsdatum
Official Stamp
Amtliches Siegel

Heiratsurkunde

F 1

(Standesamt Stuttgart Nr. 15/1946)

Der Studierende der Medizin Ernst A b r a h a m
israelitisch - wohnhaft in Bamberg - - - - -
geboren am 8.6.1924 - - - in Wien - - - - -

(Standesamt - - - - - Nr. - - - - -), und
die Gustava Giena T r a c h m a n n , ohne Beruf.
israelitisch - wohnhaft in Stuttgart-Degerloch - -
geboren am 10.4.1922 - - in Krakau - - - - -

(Standesamt - - - - - Nr. - - - - -)
haben am 15. April 1946 vor dem Standesamt
Stuttgart die Ehe geschlossen.

Vater des Mannes: Adolf A b r a h a m , zuletzt
wohnhaft in Krakau. - - - - -

Mutter des Mannes: Sara Regina A b r a h a m , geborene
Wilder, zuletzt wohnhaft in Krakau. - - - - -

Vater der Frau: Ignacy T r a c h m a n n , zuletzt
wohnhaft in Krakau. - - - - -

Mutter der Frau: Viktoria T r a c h m a n n , geborene
Grünberg, zuletzt wohnhaft in Krakau. - - - - -

Vermerke: Die Personalien der Eheleute und ihrer
Eltern beruhen auf mündlichen Angaben. - - - - -



Stuttgart, den 15. April 1946

Der Standesbeamte

XXXXXXXXXX

Date June 27, 1946.1. This is to certify that Ernst ABRAHAM, born at _____, (name in full)Austria

(country)

Vienna

(town)

(district)

, on 8th

(day)

of June
(month)1924
(year)Male
(sex)Married
(marital status)Gisela ABRAHAM nee Trachmann

(given & maiden name of wife)

intends to immigrate to _____

United States.2. He ~~(she)~~ will be accompanied by no one

(Here list all family members by name, birthplace & date, together with citizenship of each)

3. His ~~(her)~~ occupation is student

4. DESCRIPTION

Height 5 ft. 5 in.Hair red-brown Eyes blue

Distinguishing marks or features:

No. A-18680 tattooed on left forearm.Ernst AbrahamErnst Abraham

(Signature)

5. He ~~(she)~~ solemnly declares that he has never committed nor has he been convicted of any crime except as follows none6. He is unable to produce birth certificate, marriage license, divorce papers and/or ~~police~~ ~~records~~ for the following reason(s) not available. Has Police Dossier.

*We feel we are imposing, tip toe around house, never able to go to the movies,
So not come late and wake our hosts. We considered them to be elderly.
They were in low 60's.
But apartments are impossible to get.
Thousands of veterans coming home, from all over the world.*

New York 1946)

*My first job is with a goldsmith, on Nassau street, downtown.
I make wax molds for golden watch bands. My pay 90 cents an hour, minimum wage.
Gina works at sewing, on a double needle machine, minimum wages.
By November we saved up \$200 (no rent to pay)
Weather is changing. It's windy and cold. We need overcoats.
I heard about a place called Florida. It's always warm, you don't need coats
We discuss it and buy tickets on a Greyhound bus.*



*As I looked, when first coming
to the USA. 22 years old.*

Miami 1946)

*We came to Miami on a bus. Ticket: \$20.
It took 5 days. On the same bus we met an older Hungarian woman.
We told her our story, she told us her's.
She and her husband Alex, own a rooming house, in Miami city.
We could a room there.
We had at least a start. We rented a room from her, nice part of town.
Residential area, palm trees, all over (we never saw a palm tree).
We will look around for a day or two and then look for work.
It's beautiful and warm. Paradise!*

Miami 1946)

*We had \$200 when starting out. Tickets, food, down payment on rental.
Money is going fast. Better start looking for work.
Nothing. No jobs. It's off season, come back in December!
Hotels are empty.
Hot dog and orange drink for dinner. It's getting awfully hot.
The only airconditioned places are the movie houses.
Entrance .25 cents. We spend 4 hours a day watching movies.
Nearby grocery store is owned by a European couple (came in 1938).
They feel sorry, take what you need, you will pay, when you find work.*

*In mid December, Giena found work, as a chambermaid in a beach front hotel (Victor).
A couple of weeks later, I found one, as a porter.*

*Miami 1947-48)
We did well on our new found jobs
People liked Giena, tipped well.
From a view of point of European, the job were, low class.
We were in a new land and a new attitude. Here no work is shameful.
With our first paychecks, repaid our kind grocers, areas on our rent,
The rest, MOVIES!
We loved movies. Always double features.*

*Miami 1948)
While living in the Miami rooming house, Alex died.
The distraught widow, wanted to sell and leave. Price \$3000.
I knew it's a great opportunity. 17 rooms in a nice part of city.
Did not know how to go about it, About banks and mortgages.
One of my lost opportunities*

*Miami 1948)
About midseason, we found new jobs.
At present, we commuted daily. From Miami city to Miami Beach.
Each worked in different hotel, at different schedules.
We were now offered to work together in same hotel and offered a room, at no charge.
No rent to pay, no commuting. Definitely better.
Hotel "Alden" it's still there, at 29 Street and Indian Creek Dr.
Giena a chambermaid, I a handyman and bellhop.
Every evening after work, we went to the beach. It was great!
We also made money and saved it all.*

*Miami 1948)
One thought always stayed with us. The guys in Germany.
Every week, we would go food shopping. things that were not perishable.
Put it in a box and ship it to Bamberg.
We hoped, they will be coming soon. But it was dragging, on and on.
The hotel owned by three partners (Simmons, Blumstein and Levine)
They owned a hotel in Ferndale N.Y. Offered us summer jobs there.
We accepted.*

*Ferndale N.Y. 1948)
We started work in mid March.
Get this hotel ready to open. Gallons of paint, doors don't close, toilets
don't flush, grounds are a mess. It's just us and our boss. work, work..
One could imagine those meals. Mostly tomatoe herring.
Some days he would take us to a restaurant.
Hotel has an old truck, to ferry all this junk around.
this is how I learned to drive, standart shift, no less.
Later in the season, I would park all those fancy cars, great driving school.*

*Ferndale N.Y. 1948)
In those days, hotels, had everything.
The butcher, the baker, cook and second cook, the band, the MC and
the Jokemaster and the "tumblers" (Social director).*

*After a while, we knew every joke, routine or tune, by heart.
Some of them became friends, for years.
But rovers, can't keep friends*

Ferndale 1948)

*Summer over, we wanted to go back to Florida. It was still too early.
We had some time to kill.
Rented a room, in hotel on 49th street, off Broadway.
Ate all the meals in restaurants and saw all the movies.
Then on "the silver meteor" came to Miami.
Another winter at the Alden. It was great.
We were young and in love. (at least I was)*

Asbury Park N.J. 1949)

*Same guys who owned the Alden, leased a hotel in Asbury Park.
We opened the place for business
By now we were experts, in painting and repairing toilets, electric lights...
It's etched in my memory, that while there, Israel became an independent nation.
It meant a lot to me, I often felt guilty, for not going to Israel and fight for it.
After our experiences the place to be was build Israel and trying to get rich in America.*

Asbury Park 1949)

*We had a good summer. I as a bellhop, Giena had a little stand in the lobby.
I sold beer in dinning room, sometimes run crap games.
Our maitre'd, taught me how. He knew all the angles.
At summer's end we had \$3,000. A lot of money then.*

New York 1949)

*Summer over, our boss made a lavish wedding for his daughter, in the hotel.
Guests arrived from all over, each assigned a room.
Wedding lasted two days.
We had some time off, between seasons.
Bought our first car. An 1941 Buick, two tone, 4 doors, beautiful.
With my new license and a new car, we went to Miami.
5 days driving, about 4 or 5 hours a day, and hotel and movies.
Some of those towns felt scary, I would register under an assumed name,
that did not sound Jewish.
Every 50 miles the car needed oil, that's about 25 oil stops.
In one of those towns I smashed a fender.*

Miami Beach 1950)

*We did not go back to the Alden anymore.
Rented a small apartment, 10 th street and Collins, a converted garage.
This year I was a night clerk and a dinner waiter.
Giena was back at the Victor.
Before the trip back north we sold the car, got our money back. Cars were in demand.
Still have a picture of that car.
Then came the news. They are coming from Germany!*

Brooklyn 1950)

After the winter in Florida, we tired from constant moving, north and south again.

We wanted to stay in one place.

Appartments were still impossible to get.

We bought a small candy -luncheonette, in Brooklyn, on Foster ave. in Flatbush.

Aunt Rose lived nearby and we visited often, this aquainted us with Brooklyn.

It had a small room with a kitchen and the rear door opened to a smaal grassy yard.

Our first home! It wasn't much, but it was ours.

Giena always loved dogs. A boxer puppy, was soon a new addition.

Brooklyn 1950)

The store was opened 6 1/2 days. Only time off, Mondays afternoon.

Vicky was born, while we lived behind the store.

One room with a baby and a dog.

Carriage in back yard, when we worked in store.

Our landlord, also owned a an appartment building around the corner on Rugby Rd.

Promised first available appartment.

Julian with Helga, Mala, Joe and Eddie, Henry and Alfred, They were all in N.Y.

They shared an appartment in Williamsburg, Bklyn. on Lorimer street.

To them we were Americans with a store.

The store was a struggle from the start, 12 -14 hours a day, 6 1/2 days.

We barely made ends meet, it was a mistake. We were getting tired.

The promised appartment, materialized.

A one bedroom, walk up, 4th floor, \$39 a month, rent.

Giena is pregnant again.

Sold the store, got most of my money back, glad to be rid of it.

Brooklyn 1952)

Our landlord, Mr. Colton (who is Jewish, but came to US a long time ago).

is passionate about our past and promisses to get us all appartments,

as they vacate. This how we all came to live, at 630 Rugby Rd.

We all lived as one happy family, for many years.

Doing everything together. Where one went, all went.

Brooklyn 1953)

We exchange our appartment, from walk up, to one on first floor, with 2 bedrooms.

Mala and Joe move into ours.

We buy new furniture, carpeting, drapery, we have a decorator, Mr. Chasin.

Diane is born that year.

I drive a taxi, nightshift, you make a little more at night.

Very hard work and long hours, but I have to make a living.

A wife and two children.

Still I would not want to do for the rest of my life.

Europeans look down at this kind of work.

Little did I know, thie will be my career.

Brooklyn 1956)

We saved a little money and feel I have to try something.

Somewhere \$2-\$3000.

My father's dogma "Ernst don't work for anyone, but yourself".

So with Henry and Julian, as partners, we bought a restaurant,

*At 12th. street and Broadway, in Manhattan. It was a huge operation, price \$40,000.
About week later, Julian (our chef), changed his mind and left.
That left Henry and me in the store.*

Manhattan 1956)

*We were in trouble, from the start. Without a chef (highest salary in restaurant)
We were forced to rely on employment agencies and change chefs constantly.
we had no experience to handle so big an operation.
We bought the store from 2 older couples, who all worked in store (without pay).
Even though we did a lot of business, we were losing money
We did not know what to do and where to turn.
After 4 years of struggling and paying of \$30,000 of our mortgage,
we returned the store, to the original owners
This was my "work for yourself" experience.*

Manhattan 1960)

*While in the store, one of our regulars, were two partners, custom tailors.
A very busy small shop, working late hours. They ordered everything from us
breakfast, lunch and dinners, for all employees. Paid by the month, hundreds of dollars.
Often, in lieu of payment we made custom clothes, for ourselves.
Suits, jackets, slacks. Best dressed guys in the business.*

Manhattan 1960)

*A good part of our store's business came from a nearby shoe factory, Pollizio.
Sounds Italian, but it was Jewish hands.
While we were still in business, the management, approached us to operate coffee breaks
in their shop. Union demanded it.
We bought all necessary equipment, to operate.
After the store's closing and after discussing it with Henry, I took over
operating the food concession.
I was offered a small space, and a new business was born.
This is where I made a living for the next 15 years.*

Queens 1965)

*This year we bought our house in Kew Garden Hills, on 72 ave.
To me it was the Taj-mahal.
I remember, how proud I was.
Gina undertook the decorating part.
It also brought Marek Chasin into our house (As a decorator, he had open entry)
Almost from the start, our marriage started to unravel.
The details, of what went wrong and when, will vary.
Depending who is telling the story.
After 13 miserable years, in the house, we finally, divorced.
Vicky and Diane, being the only bright spots in those years.
We finally sold this unhappy house. Good riddance.*

Queens 1974)

*Pollizio, goes from manufacturing, to importing.
Workers are being laid off. My business is dwindling, I have to leave.
Nothing to salvage. I am at crossroads. I go back to driving a taxi to pay my bills.
Very little money saved, We lived high for my income. Maid, gardener, 2 cars, insurance....
Nothing better is coming along. In 1975, I buy a taxi medallion, for \$23,000.*

*I enjoyed my work, in those years, I was my own boss.
Worked long hours, but slowly came up from the pile of debt.
All those bills coming at once.
I had some interesting things happen, some funny, some nerve wrecking,
but never too tragic, no guns no knives....*

Riverdale 1996)

*In 1989, I became 65 years old and decided to retire.
Enough !
It just was getting to hard. Traffic, young eager drivers ,always cutting in,
I was not getting rich, one way or another.
Time on reflecting, doing things I never had time before.
One thing always on my mind, is the Holocaust.
I feel we never talked about it enough, at home.
This is when I decided, to write it all down.
Maybe you ,or my grandsons, will read it some day.
I also have fun writing it.*

Riverdale 1996)

*We are leaving for Florida in a few days.
We both enjoy those months spent there.
Cards, movies, eating out, parties, dancing....
All the aches and pains of our "Golden Years", somehow feel better there.*

Riverdale 1996)

*Looking through these pages, one person was named sparingly, my sister Lisa.
She was 2 years my junior and I was her :Hero, older brother.
When her friends, came over, she always proudly introduced me: this is my brother.
She always remembered my birthday and always had something for me.
(even in the Ghetto).
She was taken , with my mother in the fall of 1942. She was sweet 16 then.
The enormity of the Nazi's crimes are mind bogling.
I wish I had been a better brother to her.
While in the Krakow ghetto, she had her first boyfriend.
I did not approve of him and told her so. (I am sorry now)
He was too good looking, too handsome.
Half of Ghetto's girls were after him.
They would meet in the building's courtyard, so it was an innocent affair.
She knew so little of life. Now I am glad she at least had this.*

Riverdale 1999)

*I want to explain, those rewrites.
I originally wrote those memoirs in 1996.
In 1999 I decided to add some pictures, to these pages.
This is the reason for rewriting them. Essentially they are same.
Small changes were made .*

Riverdale 1999)

*There is a subject,that needs to be elaborated on.My ex wife Giena.
She certainly deserves a prominent place in my memoirs.
She meant very much to me.
I was smitten with her,when I first saw her in Bamberg,Germany.
Henry and Alfred,brought her to Bamberg from Stuttgart,where she was living at the time.
Our romance started almost immediately.
When she went back to Stuttgart, I followed.
Traveling, back and forth, Stuttgart-Bamberg, Bamberg-Stuttgart.
When my visa, arrived,we married, so she could accompany me, as my wife.
We were young, in love,in a new land. Life was full of wonders.
A piece of my heart, will always be hers.*

Riverdale 1997)

Reflections

*Did I have a good life or a bad one? Was I succesfull or a failure?
Did we raise our children,the right way?Was I a good son?
What kind of husband did I make?
Am I happy?Should i be doing something, I am not?
Thousands of thoughts, few have answers.
I am content. Halina is a great person, always there for me.
We have a lot of respect for each other. Love? Yes, I think it's love.
Success or failure? Is money the yardstick?If so, then I am somewhere in the middle.
I rather not answer theese questions.I don't know, how.
About my grandsons.How will they grow?What ways will they follow?
I feel very strongly,about education
If you can't give them millions of \$,then you must give them education.
Something to fall back on.
A big thing in my life,was reading and would love to see my grandsons develope
this love for books.
Colleges are more expensive every year, you must have very good grades,
to get into the best schools.Where usualy, prestige and success follow.
They are still young, but you have to think about it.*

Riverdale 1997)

Resolutions!

*No. New Year resolutions. I probably could not keep them, anyway.
What then? I wish I knew the answer.
I am a cockeyed optimist, always was. Something will turn up.
What that something is,nobody knows(Jackie Mason)*

Riverdale 1997)

*The times of one's youth, are usualy remembered as best.
So it is, that some of my best ones are from Rugby Rd. and our home in Queens.
The house, also bring back,some very sad ones.
It were the times,when you both were litle and I watched you grow and mature.
Some silly ones,our trips to Coney Island, when you all came home crying
Our trips to the zoo,Prospect Park and of course Zeiger's.
All the silly things children do, will someday be cherished memories.*

Riverdale 1997)

Henry died today.

It was incurable. For some month now, his death came as a long awaited blessing.

For him and his loved ones.

He could not be Henry anymore and he could not die either.

It's our big fear a long ,painful death.

With time to think and contemplate, your body wasting away and mind still working well.

I met Henry in Plaszow, Krakow. He came to visit his brothers in the shoe factory.

On one of his visits, we were all taken out and deported to Starachowice.

He just happened to be there.

After Starachowice, our ways parted. We met again in Buchenwald.

A few days ,after the war's end, at a concert, that I described before.

He was always a very decent person.

Sleep well, my decent friend.

This is my eulogy for Henry(Hermon as seniora says)

Ghetto 1942)

The story of Lajcie.

My father's youngest brother was Leiser

A thin and smallish man, married to a thin and smallish woman named Lajcie.

They were taking care of my father's mother, in the last years of her life.

They stayed with her, in the village of Biecz.

All brothers, agreed to send a sum of money every month, to support them.

(It's the Polish Social Security,

After my grandmother died, they moved to Krakow and the brothers set them up in a small business. They made a small living and had two small daughters.

When war broke out, the store was liquidated. Leiser fled to Russia.

Lajcia was left with two small children.

The brothers kept them from starving.

Came the Ghetto, Lajcia and her daughters found a small place to live.

A small room with a garret.

When my father's enterprise in the shoe factory, took off, he bought gold bracelets and gold coins.

Keeping it home, was always dangerous. If found, shipment to a K.Z. was always the rule.

We will keep it in Lajcie's garret. A poor woman with starving children, will surely not be suspect. No one will dream to look there.

One day, my father went to check on his cache, lo and behold, it's gone!

Lajcie admitted, they were hungry and she took it for her children's sake.

A lot of crying and yelling

A few months later, Lajcie and her daughters, were taken on a transport.

Never heard of them again.

There must be a moral to this story. I just don't know what it is.